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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
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PROPOSALS FOR ACCELERATED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ADDIS ABABA PLAN OF ACTION FOR STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA IN THE 1990S

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 683 (XXV) of May 1990, the ECA Conference of Ministers adopted the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s. In section 24 of the Plan of Action, ECA was requested to convene a working group meeting to further review and elaborate on its principles, objectives and recommendations and formulate detailed strategies for its implementation.

2. The present paper highlights the main actions undertaken since the adoption of the Plan of Action and points out some specific issues. The Committee is expected to provide guidance on relevant follow-up activities. Some historical background is first given on African statistical development which led to the formulation of this Plan of Action.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A. History of African statistical development

3. Statistical offices were set up in a number of African countries in the late 1940s during the colonial period. The main purposes of such offices were to respond to the needs of the Treasury and/or to produce statistics for the colonial administration.

4. After independence, particularly in the early 1960s, many African countries continued with the statistical offices set up during the colonial period without trying to adapt them to the requirements of independent States. However, some countries started to review the structure of their statistical services. Most of the professional staff of the statistical services, including the management staff, were then expatriates. These were phased out progressively and as from the early 1970s only some of them remained under technical cooperation agreements. In the Portuguese-speaking African countries, most of the expatriate staff, if not all, left when the countries concerned obtained their independence, so that very few national professionals were available to take over the management of the statistical offices.

5. Professional-level training of African statisticians was initially given in overseas institutions, including universities. Later, appropriate institutions were set up within the region for the training of professional statisticians. However, there was a marked scarcity of potential candidates with a satisfactory background in mathematics.

6. The middle-level statistical staff initially received on-the-job training but from 1960 onwards, middle-level courses were established in a number of countries of the region, including Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana and Morocco, with the assistance of the United Nations.

7. Many statistical offices remained attached to the ministries of finance after independence. It is therefore not surprising that emphasis was initially put on economic statistics, including international trade, consumer price index, household budget survey, agriculture, industry and labour. It was later, when ministries of planning were created in most African countries, that statistical offices were gradually attached to those ministries.

8. It was in the early 1970s that most African countries decided to pay due attention to demographic and social statistics, particularly following the 1970 round of population and housing censuses in the region. Financial assistance has been provided by UNFPA and other donor agencies for demographic data collection and analysis. At the sixth session of the Joint

Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers, held in January 1990, it was expressed that there had been a tendency for external assistance to be concentrated in certain areas of statistics, such as demography, while other areas, like economic statistics, were neglected. However, it has to be acknowledged that the issue is not that of overemphasis on demographic information, which continues to be badly needed, but that of harmonious development of all areas of statistics in accordance with the national priorities.

9. It should be indicated that in the early 1960s, most of the data were processed manually, although a few were mechanically processed on the first generation of computers. The experience was that the results of the surveys which were processed manually were released more timely than those involving wholly or partly computer processing. This was due, among others, to lack of appropriate local expertise in data processing in view of inadequate training and little attention paid by some expatriate experts to transfer of skills, and to lack of maintenance of computer equipment. It should however be noted that the tabulation programmes used in computer processing were more comprehensive than those used in manual processing.

10. A number of technical cooperation programmes were launched since the early 1970s to assist African countries in building up self-reliance in the statistical field. These include, among others: the African Census Programme (ACP), financed by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which was subsequently replaced by the Regional Advisory Service in Demographic Statistics (RASDS); the World Fertility Survey (WFS) which was carried out by the International Statistical Institute (ISI) in collaboration with the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), with funds provided by UNFPA and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and other sources; the African Household Survey Capability Programme (AHSCP) and the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA), which were established in 1978 by the legislative organs of ECA with their regional components executed by ECA and funded by UNDP; the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), coordinated by the Institute for Resource Development and funded by USAID; the Living Standard Measurement Study (LSMS), sponsored by the World Bank; the surveys under the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) project, co-sponsored by UNDP, the World Bank and the African Development Bank (ADB); the Pan Arab Project for Child Development (PAPCHILD), sponsored by the League of Arab States and supported by the Arab Gulf Fund (AGFUND), for UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO as well as the United Nations; and the Statistical Development Programme for Africa (SDPA) project which started at ECA in 1987 with UNDP financing and incorporated the regional components of AHSCP and STPA as well as a project in national accounts.

11. Towards the end of the 1970s and throughout the 1980s, the African continent suffered severe economic crisis. As a consequence, public expenditures were curtailed in many countries and this affected the process of statistical development which had been started. However, the economic crisis was not the only reason for the deterioration of African statistics. Among other reasons were the lack of appreciation of the role of quantitative information in development planning, the low status of statistical services vis-à-vis other government services, the lack of proper management of statistical services and the tendency towards routine of some statistical services.

12. Although the technical cooperation programmes in statistics mentioned above have achieved some successes towards statistical development in the African region, many of them could not be sustained when the funding ended or the expatriate experts left. The failure of some African countries to provide their share of project costs or to continue their support when the external financing ceases, the poor management of some statistical offices and the lack of motivation of national professionals are among the major difficulties in the successful implementation of these programmes. It should also be mentioned that, in many cases, there was no proper coordination and cooperation among the international agencies concerned which sometimes led to duplication of activities and wastage of resources.

B. Current state of African statistics

13. Most National Statistical Services (NSSs) are centralized, with a Central Statistical Office (CSO) which is responsible for the collection processing and dissemination of all kinds of statistical data. In many countries, there are also statistical units within sectoral ministries which are either part of the CSO or independent units. In addition, some organizations, like the central bank, are also producing data.

14. The CSO is generally attached to the ministry responsible for planning. The exceptions to this are, for example, the Ghana Statistical Service and the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) of Egypt are autonomous bodies which are outside the civil service but remain in the public sector. In some countries, the status of the CSOs is relatively low in the government hierarchy and structure so that it is difficult for them to promote their programmes or to obtain the required funds.

15. Efforts have been made to train African statisticians although many national statistical offices still lack enough qualified staff due to brain drain to more attractive jobs in other government departments, parastatal and private sectors. There are currently 16 professional and/or middle-level training institutions, offering regional services, which participate in the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA). Eight of these institutions are French-speaking, seven English-speaking and one Portuguese-speaking. There are also eight associate STPA centres overseas which provide short-term and specialized training.

16. Many African statistical offices do not have adequate physical infrastructure and equipment as well as statistical libraries. However, most of CSOs are now equipped with micro-computers, although not yet in sufficient number in many cases. The advent of the micro-computer is revolutionalizing the way in which statistical activities are conducted. Also, the availability of a large number of software packages facilitates the task of the statistician. However, a number of CSOs have not been able to stay abreast of the rapid developments that are taking place in the fields of software and hardware technology. For example the use of desk-top publishing techniques is not yet common in statistical offices. Thus, there are still considerable delays between the completion of data processing and the publication of the results. This is the case of some countries which have not yet published all the reports relating to the 1980 round of population censuses (1976-1984) while the preparations for the 1990 round had already started in some cases.

17. Only about half of the countries of the region have statistical work programmes, which makes it difficult to relate resources and outputs and affects the management of statistical offices. There is also the need to improve working relationships between management and the other staff of CSOs.

18. The main sources of data continue to include censuses, surveys and, to a limited extent, administrative records. Almost all African countries have now undertaken at least one population census. Chad, the only country which has not yet carried out a full census so far, is preparing for it. However, it is a fact that population censuses entail very high costs. In view of financial constraints faced by many countries of the region, it would be advisable, in future, to explore ways and means of reducing such costs, for example through increasing use of sampling in censuses. Surveys are expected to play a central role in the agenda of Africa because of their relatively low cost and the possibility of obtaining the data more quickly. A number of African countries have formulated survey programmes on the basis of their own priorities and conditions. However, due to shortage of funds, many of these countries had to accept and implement surveys proposed by external agencies, which may not have been in their priorities. Administrative records have been used for many years for trade and financial statistics. However there is the need to explore also other records such as the social security in order to expand the subject coverage. Efforts should also continue to improve the civil registration systems and vital statistics collection in Africa.

19. Some improvements have been noted in the quality of data collected by CSOs but a lot still remains to be done in this area. Users and analysts of statistical data in the region, particularly those from universities as well as from multilateral and bilateral agencies, are critical of the quality of the data. More applications of statistical data are expected to occur in the African region in many fields of activity such as policy formulation, planning, administration, research and teaching. African statistical offices should therefore take the challenge of producing the types of data which meet the requirements of users.

20. The issue of measuring the contribution of women to development has received particular attention in recent years, especially within the framework of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. Relevant initiative has already been taken by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), in collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Office and ECA, by preparing a Handbook on Compilation of Statistics on Women in the Informal Sector, Industry, Trade and Services in Africa. The national statistical services should endeavour to collect data on the role of women in development as part of their work programme in the 1990s.

21. Efforts should also be made to promote the role of women in statistical development. During a recent meeting organized by ECA, it was pointed out that there were very few women in national statistical services and also in training, both as trainers and trainees. It was observed that women would contribute immensely in the development of statistics by being active in these areas.

22. Many African countries do not have any mechanisms for coordination of statistical activities among producers and between producers and users. This is an important issue which

should receive due attention in the 1990s in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to achieve greater harmonization of concepts, definitions and classifications at the national level.

23. As already indicated, coordination among donor agencies, involving the recipient country, should also be strengthened to avoid unnecessary competition and wastage of resources as well as to promote cooperation.

24. The above historical background points out only some of the major issues relating to statistical development in the region. A comprehensive review of the overall position was undertaken by an intergovernmental working group meeting on the implementation of the Plan of Action and by the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers, as reported in the next section of the present paper.

III. THE ADDIS ABABA PLAN OF ACTION

25. It should be recalled that an assessment of statistical capacity was undertaken by ECA in 1989 in 32 African countries under the UNDP-financed World Bank/ECA project on "Data collection related to development programmes and aid flows in Africa". The results of this assessment led to the recommendation by the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers, at its sixth session in January 1990, of the adoption of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s. As already mentioned, the Plan of Action was formally adopted by the ECA Conference of Ministers in May 1990.

26. The objectives of the Plan of Action are as follows:

(a) To achieve national self-sufficiency in statistical production, including the creation of a comprehensive national statistical data base by the end of the century;

(b) To improve the reliability and relevance of data produced in African countries;

(c) To undertake production of data required for formulating, monitoring and evaluating programmes designed to restructure and transform African economies.

(d) To improve the timeliness in the production and dissemination of statistical information;

(e) To increase awareness of the importance of statistical information among users;

(f) To strengthen and sustain statistical training programmes at various levels and institutions;

(g) To promote contact and dialogue among African statisticians;

(h) To encourage improvement in the organizational set-up of the NSSs and assure their autonomy; and

(i) To improve coordination of all statistical development programmes at both national and international levels.

27. The Plan of Action recommends steps which African Governments and international organizations should take to achieve these objectives. In particular, a working group meeting was to be convened to discuss in detail the principles, objectives and recommendations of the Plan of Action and come out with strategies and implementation programmes.

28. The working group meeting on the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s was held from 16 to 20 July 1991 at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Nairobi, Kenya. It was attended by representatives of 20 African countries, including users of statistics, the directors of four STPA Centres and one associate centre, and a number of United Nations agencies as well as bilateral and multilateral agencies. These were: ILO, FAO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank, National Institute of Statistics of France (INSEE), Overseas Development Administration (ODA) of the United Kingdom, Statistics Sweden, Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT), African Development Bank (ADB) and African Statistical Association (AFSA).

29. The working group considered a draft strategy paper prepared by an ECA consultant. Before preparing the report, the consultant undertook missions to ECA and to a number of United Nations agencies as well as to other multilateral and bilateral organizations.

30. After a critical review of the problems encountered by national statistical services in the region and lengthy discussions of the draft strategy paper prepared by the consultant, the working group adopted a Strategy for the Implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s. This strategy document was further reviewed by the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers at its seventh session in March 1992.

31. The revised strategy document together with an expanded summary are being submitted to the ECA Conference of Ministers as background materials. The strategy document contains three parts. Part I is a review of African statistical development during the period 1960-1990, including a brief account of technical and financial assistance to Africa in this area. Major challenges in the 1990s are also highlighted. These include the competition between internal and external demands for data, the selection of a minimum or core list of subjects to be covered, the management of statistical offices, formulation of data dissemination policy, marketing of statistical outputs, determination of statistical priorities, coordination, increased involvement of women in statistical development, and the need for methods and standard units in NSSs.

32. Part II of the document outlines the urgent actions which should be taken to ensure that a good national statistical system is set in place and that the outputs of the system are effectively used.

33. Finally, part III proposes ways and means of implementing the various elements of the strategy.

IV. SELECTED MEASURES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION

34. The strategy spells out tasks to be performed at the national, subregional, regional as well as global levels to revitalize African statistics.

35. The actions to be taken at the national level include the following: (a) setting up of a Needs Assessment/Programme Review and Strategy Development (NA/PRSD) team; (b) preparation of statistical development plans; (c) Development of annual or biennial work programme budgets; (d) data processing and data analysis plans; (e) data storage, retrieval and dissemination including development of statistical data bases; (f) creation of public awareness; and (g) adoption of new directions for technical cooperation.

36. Actions at the regional and subregional level include: (a) development of concepts, definitions and classifications suited to the African region; (b) strengthening of statistical training and research; (c) provision of short-term advisory services; (d) development of regional statistical information system; (e) preparation of guidelines in respect of national statistical development plans; (f) preparation and adaptation of handbooks and manuals, coordination of technical cooperation at the regional level; and (g) role of African non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in enhancing statistical capacity in the African region.

37. Actions proposed to be taken at the global level are: (a) umbrella programmes and networking arrangements; (b) development of global standards, handbooks and manuals; (c) provision of interregional advisory services; and (d) machinery for coordination of technical cooperation at the global level.

38. Only a few issues will be raised in the present paper for consideration by the Committee. These relate to the establishment of NA/PRSD teams and their terms of reference, the creation of public awareness of statistics, the adoption of new directions for technical cooperation and the provision of regional advisory services.

A. Needs Assessment/Programme Review and Strategy Development (NA/PRSD)

39. The first step to be taken is the appointment by each country of a Needs Assessment Team or a Programme Review and Strategy Development Team as the situation and conditions vary from one country to another.

40. The team is expected to carry out two main functions:

(a) To draw lessons from past experience and to identify needs and priorities, by:

(i) Ascertaining country policies and priorities in respect of economic and social development, population planning, migration, economic activity and conditions of employment, status of women and children; environment, etc;

(ii) Identifying the availability and timeliness of existing statistical outputs, and the extent to which they are used;

(iii) Assessing the extent to which existing statistics have satisfied and are expected to satisfy users in setting up and monitoring national plans and policies,

(iv) Ascertaining past and expected future gaps in the available statistics, assess the constraints that these gaps have placed on the work of users, and set priorities for existing or required statistical outputs.

(v) Reviewing the statistical programme and recommend new or revised statistical outputs or the discontinuation of low priority and unused data. In particular, the team should recommend a detailed three-year programme and give a broad perspective of a long-term programme;

(vi) Assessing the infrastructure and institutional capabilities for project management, data collection, data processing and data base development, dissemination and statistical analysis, not only in respect of the national statistical system but also the analytical capacities in the agencies responsible for planning and policy making;

(vii) Making recommendations concerning statistical advisory bodies, statistical legislation, organisation and management of statistical organizations and services;

(viii) Reviewing and making recommendations concerning statistical training and research in the country, including "in-house" training, on-the-job training as well as more formal training by government and non-governmental bodies;

(ix) Reviewing previous external assistance to the statistical development of the country, covering issues such as the extent and sources of funds, the extent and content of assistance, the degree of capability building and its sustainablity, the coordination of assistance, etc., and making recommendations on these matters to guide and make the most effective use of possible future assistance. The team should also identify and cost any external aid inputs which are envisaged to be achieved in the statistical programmes which the team recommends; and

(x) Commenting upon likely or possible constraints to the implementation of programmes for statistical development in the country;

(b) To formulate a draft 5-10 year national statistical development plan on the basis of the findings in a above, by:

(i) Defining clearly the objectives of the plan, the problems to be addressed during the plan period and possible solutions;

(ii) Ascertaining the human and material resources required for the implementation of the plan;

(iii) Identifying external assistance needs and possible sources of funds; and

(iv) Relating the proposed national statistical development plan to the government's strategies, priorities and planning cycle.

41. It is suggested that the Minister who is responsible for the national statistical agency should be the authority for appointing the NA/PRSD team and for issuing the terms of reference.

42. It is acknowledged that no single model for the composition of the NA/PRSD team could be proposed. However, it is recommended that the team consist of about five members and be chaired by an eminent personality who should be from the user side. Apart from the chairman, other members of the team should be equally divided between statisticians and users and their specialization should cover all major fields. Ideally, the members should all be senior and respected nationals drawn from government, private or parastatal (including university) sectors. The director of the national statistical agency should preferably be a member of the team but not the chairman.

43. There might be the need for some international experts to join the team. Countries requiring such assistance will need to invite appropriate external agencies to participate. These may be United Nations agencies, other multilateral or bilateral agencies as the country deems appropriate. It is assumed that each agency will be responsible for all costs associated with their representation in the team. The international experts should have extensive knowledge of quantitative analysis and/or data collection and dissemination procedures, working experience in developing countries and appropriate language qualifications.

44. The NA/PRSD exercise should start as soon as possible, preferably during 1992, so that the initiative for statistical development in each country will not be delayed. The exercise may last for two or three months. The team is expected to produce two main outputs, namely a report on statistical needs assessment and a draft plan for national statistical development. The report and the draft plan should be addressed to the Minister responsible for statistics who appointed the team, and copied to the relevant permanent secretary and the director of the national statistical agency.

45. The needs assessment report and the draft plan for statistical development should then be discussed with users and producers at a formal meeting and revised by the body overseeing the work of the national statistical agency on the basis of comments received.

46. The Minister responsible for statistics, after due consideration and approval of the needs assessment report and the revised draft plan for statistical development, may take the necessary action to obtain the government decision on statistical development in the country. The Minister

may then direct the appropriate government officials to implement the recommendations and the national statistical development plan accepted by the government.

47. It should be pointed out that the national statistical development plan should be an input to the overall national development plan and should constitute the main guiding document for the NSS to prepare its work programme budgets.

48. In view of the different stages of statistical development experienced by countries of the region, it is difficult to generalize. Therefore, countries may wish to adapt the above suggestions to suit their local conditions.

B. Creation of public awareness for statistics

49. There is lack of public awareness of the importance of statistics in everyday life in many developing countries, particularly in Africa. Statistics should therefore be introduced into primary and secondary schools and should be seen as an important tool for better understanding of one's social and economic environment. Statistical techniques and their applications should thus be taught across all subjects. Efforts should also be made to cultivate the interest of young students in statistics so as to encourage them to pursue professional-level statistical training, particularly post-graduate and specialized training. Special attention should be accorded to this issue in Portuguese-speaking African countries now that a professional-level statistical training centre has been opened especially for them in Lisbon, Portugal, similar to the centre in Paris, France, which is mostly for the French-speaking African countries (CESD-Paris).

50. One of the recommendations to African Governments, contained in the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s, stipulates that the Economic Community of West African States' day, 18 November should be adopted as African Statistics Day in order to increase public awareness for the important role which statistics play in all aspects of social and economic life.

51. To commemorate the African Statistics Day, ECA prepared posters which were sent to all member States and issued a press release at the beginning of November 1991. It is encouraging to note that a number of countries of the region also commemorated the African Statistics Day in 1991. The activities included broadcast on State radios, public lectures, displays and national essay competition for which prizes were awarded. It is most suitable that member States include this commemoration on their annual calendar of events. Other possible means for dissemination include articles in the local press, statements or interviews at the national TV, national poster competition in schools, design of T-shirts and issuance of special stamps.

52. The commemoration of African Statistics Day offers an opportunity to urge every individual, as well as government departments, private sector organizations and the mass media to cooperate in the development and improvement of statistics in Africa in the 1990s to enable appropriate decisions affecting the social, economic and environmental aspects of life to be made.

C. New directions for technical cooperation

53. Arrangements for technical cooperation in statistics should be improved and strengthened to contribute to successful implementation of statistical development programmes in the African region. In recent years, donors and recipient countries have been examining new approaches, in the light of past experiences, in order to maximize the impact of the use of technical cooperation resources to enhance statistical capacity in Africa and generate meaningful and sustainable statistical programmes.

54. Funding agencies such as UNDP and UNFPA have already adopted a policy for increased national execution of projects. Such a policy should be encouraged and expanded in the 1990s. There is also the need to promote the use of local experts whenever possible.

55. It is recognized that coordination is the most controversial issue in technical cooperation activities. As already indicated earlier, the lack of coordination led, in a number of cases, to unnecessary duplication of activities, wastage of resources and distortion of priorities of national statistical services (NSSs).

56. At the country level, there should be proper coordination of all statistical activities both within the NSS and among all producers of statistical data, also involving the users. This will avoid duplication of efforts and promote harmonization of concepts, definitions and classifications. There should also be a local body comprising both producers of statistics and representatives of donors to discuss periodically technical cooperation programmes in statistics, assess progress and propose follow-up action. The results of relevant discussions could be fed into the general technical cooperation consultations among government and donors. There should also be a committee of donors in each country to strengthen collaborative arrangements, exchange information and ensure that there is no duplication in technical cooperation activities which they support. Such a machinery already exists in some countries where the UNDP and World Bank representatives chair in turn the relevant meetings.

57. At the regional level, it is proposed that an inter-agency committee should be set up to assist in the coordination of technical cooperation activities in statistics, to discuss and draft guidelines relating to the NA/PRSD exercise, to review periodically progress made by individual countries in assessing their statistical needs and to monitor the implementation of the Strategy for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s. It should be mentioned that an Inter-Agency Meeting on Cooperation for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s was convened by ECA in Addis Ababa in December 1990 with the participation of EUROSTAT, ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Statistical Office and the World Bank. The meeting discussed among others the African statistics in UNDP programming, the coordination of activities and the perspectives for statistical development in Africa in the 1990s. Consultations are underway to convene the first meeting of the Inter-Agency Committee as recommended in the Strategy.

58. Finally, Technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC), which has been in existence in Africa for some years now, needs to be strengthened in the 1990s, particularly in the field of statistics.

D. Provision of regional advisory services

59. It has been recognized in the Strategy that the regional advisory services in statistics provided by the UN and its specialized agencies have been well appreciated in the past and that such services will continue to be needed, especially as long-term resident experts in statistics are gradually being phased out.

60. It should be indicated that there are two main statistical projects executed by UNECA: The Regional Advisory Service in Demographic Statistics (RASDS), financed by UNFPA, and the Statistical Development Programme for Africa (SDPA), funded by UNDP.

61. There are presently eight advisers under the RASDS which has entered a new phase as from 1 January 1992, hence the funding is now provided under a new project entitled Technical Support Services (TSS). It is envisaged by UNFPA that three regional technical support teams will be located in Addis Ababa, Dakar and Harare. The relevant arrangements are still being finalized. However, it has been agreed that the various advisers of the technical support teams will continue to be attached to their respective agencies.

62. As regards the SDPA project, there have been for most of the period five advisers: one household survey specialist, two statistical training advisers, one national accounts specialist and one data base specialist. The project should have ended on 31 December 1991, at the end of the fourth UNDP inter-country programming cycle (1987-1991). However, UNDP has approved a bridging project covering the period 1 January to 30 September 1992 to take care of the transition period for the preparation of an appropriate programme to implement the Strategy for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s. It should also be mentioned that ILO has attached to SDPA, for a number of years now, a regional adviser in household surveys.

63. There is the need to continue and to further strengthen the regional advisory services provided under the two projects mentioned above, although under new programmes in view of new developments. The various UN agencies should also be encouraged to follow the example of ILO which has proved to be a most effective way of co-ordinating technical cooperation activities.

V. ACTION BY THE COMMITTEE

64. The Technical Committee of the Whole (TEPCOW) may wish to:

(a) Express views and comments on the current state of African statistics;

(b) Consider and approve the Strategy for the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s, submitted to it by the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers;

(c) Make an appeal to the Governments of member States to set up, as soon as possible, Needs Assessment or Programme Review and Strategy Development Teams in order not to delay the activities on statistical development in each country;

(d) Request member States to inform UNECA of any action taken in connection with the NA/PRSD exercise to enable the Commission to perform efficiently its role as the regional institution responsible for the development and promotion of statistics in Africa, as stipulated in the Addis Ababa Plan of Action;

(e) Urge UNDP to support the implementation of the Strategy mentioned above under its fifth inter-country programming cycle; and

(f) Formulate any other comments and suggestions that it deems appropriate under the present agenda item.

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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS DECADE IN AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

1. The last report on the preparation of the programme for the second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (UNTACDA II) was contained in document E/ECA/CM.17/13 of March 1991 and covered activities up to April 1991.

2. The activities and progress reported in this report cover the period from May 1991. These activities include:

(a) Preparation and launching of the programme:

(i) extraordinary meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning, May 1991;

(ii) ECA Conference of Ministers, May 1991;

(iii) Economic and Social Council, July/August 1991;

(iv) transport symposium and donors technical meeting;

(v) United Nations General Assembly, December 1991;

(b) Four meetings of the Resource Mobilization Committee (RMC) in June, October, November 1991 and January 1992 to:

(i) finalize the list of projects according to the decision of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning of May 1991;

(ii) prepare for the Brussels donors technical meeting, and symposium;

(iii) review the outcome of the symposium and donors technical meeting and plan follow-up action; and

(iv) finalize action programme for programme implementation phase.

3. A summary of the outcome of the above activities is given below.

I. EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

4. An extraordinary meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning was held in Addis Ababa on 7 and 8 May 1991. It was preceded by meetings of the Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee (IACC) and the Intergovernmental Experts on Transport and Communications.

5. The Conference took major decisions relating to the scope and timing of activities of the UNTACDA II programme. Some of these relate to the re-affirmation of the order of priority of the programme, namely that:

(a) Regional and subregional integration projects are accorded highest priority;

(b) National projects with an integrative scope are next in priority; and

(c) Purely national projects are of third priority.

6. The Conference endorsed the following activities for the RMC:

(a) Hold a meeting in June or July 1991 to reconsider pending and missing projects for which additional information was provided;

(b) Empowerment of the RMC to include in the Decade programme those pending and omitted projects which met the selection criteria;

(c) Regular meetings of the RMC during the next two years to consider new projects submitted in accordance with approved guidelines. Heads of subregional and subsectoral working groups and the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Experts would be invited;

(d) A technical meeting of donors to be convened by the RMC within six months, at which the means of financing the programme would be discussed with donors and financing institutions;

(e) ECA to organize, in cooperation with members of the IACC, RMC, Chairmen of subregional and subsectoral working groups, meetings and seminars to sensitize African States and intergovernmental organizations on the objectives and strategies of the Decade and help them to realign their strategies (national level sensitization to involve grassroots and rural people);

(f) The ECA Executive Secretary was requested to contact officials of funding agencies members of the RMC to determine the specific involvement of their institutions in the implementation of the programme;

(g) The RMC was to take appropriate measures so that the approved Decade projects could be endorsed by funding agencies, even if such projects were not in structural adjustment programmes (SAPs);

(h) Meeting of regional and subregional institutions and specialized agencies before the next RMC meeting, in order to coordinate and harmonize their programmes.

7. The Conference was concerned about the absence of an industrialization aspect in the programme and adopted a resolution creating an eighth working group of UNTACDA II to prepare the component of the programme dealing with manufacturing of transport and communications equipment.

8. It was noted with concern that many African countries had not yet established their national coordinating committees (NCCs) and the Conference appealed to the States not only to establish but also to support their NCCs to be fully operational.

II. ACTIVITIES IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE MANDATE OF THE CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT, COMMUNICATIONS AND PLANNING

9. With special reference to paragraph 6 of this report in which a series of activities are mandated by the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communication and Planning, below is a brief account of how these activities have been and are being implemented.

10. The RMC met from 10 to 14 June in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire in compliance with the mandate of the Conference and considered pending and missing projects for which additional information had been provided.

11. At the conclusion of the project screening exercise, taking into account the projects previously screened, a total of 1,127 projects had been examined by the RMC. Of the total number of projects submitted, 819 were for the transport sector and 308 for the communications sector. A total of 669 projects were selected for the first list of programme projects, out of which 478 are transport and 191 are

communications sector projects. Of the 361 pending projects, 271 and 90 are for the transport and communications sectors, respectively, 97 projects were rejected, out of which 70 and 27 were for transport and communications, respectively.

12. In terms of percentages, 73 per cent of the total number of projects initially submitted were in the transport sector, while 27 per cent were in the communications sector. The total approved projects constitute about 59 per cent of the initial submission. The 361 pending and 97 rejected projects represent 32 and 9 per cent respectively of the submission.

13. With regard to paragraph 6(c) above, the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Experts of Transport and Communications and a representative of the Preferential Trade Area (PTA) participated in the RMC meeting in June at which the pending and missing projects were considered. The other subregional intergovernmental organizations, though invited, did not participate. Invitations will be extended by the RMC to the subregional intergovernmental organizations and chairmen of working groups to participate in those RMC meetings devoted to consideration of projects for subsequent inclusion in the programme.

14. In compliance with paragraph 6(d), a symposium and a meeting with donors on African transport and communications were held jointly between 27 and 29 November 1991 at the Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) in Brussels. They were jointly organized by the Belgian Royal Academy of Overseas Sciences, the Information Centre and Liaison Office of the United Nations in Brussels, ECA and ACP. The purpose of the symposium was to examine the current challenges facing transport and communications development in Africa and share experiences on the future development of the sector.

15. The meeting with development financing institutions and agencies was organized by the RMC. This Committee, which is chaired by the African Development Bank (ADB), has as members the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), the World Bank, the Commission of the European Economic Community (EEC), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ACP and ECA. The main purpose of the meeting was to inform the development financing institutions and agencies about the UNTACDA II programme and discuss possible mechanisms for assisting African countries in its implementation.

16. Over 150 experts participated in the symposium, representing over 50 countries and organizations. The discussions were wide-ranging, covering all aspects of transport and communications development in Africa.

17. Among the major outcomes of the symposium and donors meeting was a confirmation of the importance of transport and communications in Africa's economic development. In this regard, it was recommended that all efforts of African States and their intergovernmental organizations should be coordinated with those of both bilateral donor agencies and multilateral lending institutions so as to focus only on the priority programme. UNTACDA II was accepted as the vehicle for this harmonization.

18. It was generally agreed that maintenance and rehabilitation of African transport and communications infrastructure and equipment as well as human resources development deserved to be accorded the highest priority in the UNTACDA II programme. However, it was also recognized that judicious expansion of infrastructure was necessary for achieving integration and enhancing efficiency of the sector.

19. Regarding human resources, it was agreed that there was need to train Africans who would be capable of developing and managing these sectors. In this regard, it was recommended that every effort should be made to utilize African experts in carrying out studies and other projects during the implementation of UNTACDA II.

20. New ideas were introduced regarding the need to view transport and communications as an economic sector, so that it not only pays for itself, but could also contribute to the national treasury. To do this, it requires that users of transport and communications services should pay for the use of the associated infrastructure. This approach would reduce the financial constraints which result from the current dependence of these sectors on the national treasury for resources required for investment in new infrastructure and its maintenance.

21. The donors meeting endorsed the proposal that the Sub-Saharan African Transport Programme (SSATP) be merged into the UNTACDA II programme in order to rationalize all efforts in African transport and communications development.

22. It was also recommended that a forum on African transport and communications should be organized every two years, at which progress of development in African transport and communications would be reviewed. Senior policy advisers of African countries would have the opportunity to discuss with the financial community policy issues affecting African transport and communications.

23. With specific regard to paragraph 6(e) relating to the sensitization of African States and intergovernmental organizations by the RMC, IACC and ECA and the coordination and harmonization of programmes by regional and subregional institutions, these activities have been planned for 1992 and 1993.

III. LAUNCHING OF THE UNTACDA II PROGRAMME

23. It would be recalled that the second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa was proclaimed in General Assembly resolution 43/179 of 20 December 1988. The sequence of legislative activities leading to the launching of the programme have been as follows:

(a) The Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning, in resolution ECA/UNTACDA/Res.91/84 adopted in Abuja, Nigeria on 8 February 1991, recommended the formal launching of the programme;

(b) The ECA Conference of Ministers, in resolution 710 (XXVI) adopted in Addis Ababa on 12 May 1991, endorsed the above resolution and recommended same to ECOSOC;

(c) ECOSOC, in its resolution 191/83 of 26 July 1991, endorsed the ECA Conference of Ministers resolution for the launching of the second Decade and recommended same to the United Nations General Assembly;

(d) In its decision A/C.2/46/L.62 of 26 November 1991 and decision 44/456 of 20 December 1991, the United Nations General Assembly endorsed ECOSOC resolution 1991/83 formally launching the second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (1991-2000) and provided some resources for its implementation for the 1992-1993 biennium.

25. In view of the fact that the current General Assembly decision and resources cover only the biennium 1992-1993, ECA shall submit draft resolutions through the usual channels to the General Assembly for funding the implementation of the Decade in the subsequent bienniums.

26. At its eleventh meeting held in Abidjan on 31 January and 1 February 1991, the RMC agreed on the work programme for the implementation phase of the UNTACDA II programme. This programme includes the assignment of tasks and responsibilities to all actors, i.e., countries, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations agencies and financial institutions. The RMC also welcomed the integration of SSATP into UNTACDA II and urged all concerned parties to make every effort to convince other SSATP partners of the importance of efficient implementation of the Decade programme. The need for the

integration into UNTACDA II of all other UNDP-funded transport and communications projects in Africa was stressed and, in this regard, UNDP and ECA were requested to find a viable solution.

27. During this period, a team of consultants carried out an independent evaluation of the preparation of the UNTACDA II programme. The evaluation concluded that the programme was well-prepared but observed that one of its weak points was the fact that NCCs have not yet been established in all countries and some of those established are not fully functional. The evaluation recommended that the successful implementation of the UNTACDA II programme shall largely depend on strengthened and functional NCCs and urged African countries to abide by the decision taken in Tangier regarding the establishment and support of NCCs by each African country.

28. Finally, it should be noted that transport and communications have been identified as one of the priority sectors in the UNDP Fifth Programming Cycle, 1992-1997, which was adopted at the extraordinary meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers in Windhoek, Namibia, in November 1991.

Annex

FOLLOW-UP ACTION ON ECA CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS RESOLUTION 710 (XXVI) ON THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS DECADE IN AFRICA

1. In adopting the above resolution, the ECA Conference of Ministers, in operative paragraph 2, recommended the Decade programme to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the United Nations General Assembly for approval. In accordance with operative paragraph 3, ECOSOC, in its resolution 1991/83 of 26 July 1991, endorsed ECA resolution 710 (XXVI) on the launching of the second Decade programme and recommended same to the General Assembly. The latter, in turn, endorsed the ECOSOC resolution. In formally launching UNTACDA II, the General Assembly also provided ECA with some regular budgetary resources {para. 3(b)} to enable it to carry out its responsibilities as the lead agency for UNTACDA II effectively and efficiently during the 1992-1993 biennium.

2. The request submitted to the General Assembly was for an amount of $US 489,500. These resources under subprogramme 19 of Section 23 of the proposed programme budget would partly cover the costs involved. It would partly be the case for consultants ($18,000), travel of staff ($52,000) and requirements for temporary assistance for meetings ($156,000). The remaining costs, amounting to $263,500 (i.e., $56,000 for consultants, $107,000 for travel of staff and $99,000 for staff costs) represent the additional requirements under Section 23 of the proposed programme budget for the 1992-1993 biennium, to be treated in the context of the guidelines for the operation of the United Nations Contingency Fund. In actual fact, the General Assembly has provided only $263,500. This amount is grossly inadequate for the activities mandated in the resolution.

3. With regard to operative paragraph 4(a), (b) and (c) of resolution 710 (XXVI), the majority of ECA member States have now established national coordinating committees as their instruments of action for implementation of the objectives of UNTACDA II at national level. Their respective governments are now expected to report to the Conference on the functioning of these NCCs such as participating in the implementation of UNTACDA II projects.

4. In response to operative paragraph 5, the secretariat is trying, in various ways "to ensure that adequate manpower and financial resources, regular and extrabudgetary are allocated for harmonizing, coordinating and monitoring the organization and implementation of the Decade programme". The General Assembly's allocation mentioned above is certainly part of these efforts. Furthermore, the 1992-1993 regular work programme of the ECA secretariat has been revised with a view to focusing the work of the ECA regular staff on the implementation of the UNTACDA II programme. In addition, a project document has been submitted to UNDP (para. 6) requesting extrabudgetary resources to enable the secretariat to hire some additional, albeit, temporary staff for the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the programme.

5. The United Nations agencies and other international organizations are working closely with the secretariat, in accordance with operative paragraph 7, mainly as active members of the RMC, the IACC and the subsectoral working groups of UNTACDA II.

6. In order to facilitate the financing of national, subregional and regional Decade projects, in response to the appeal in operative paragraph 8, a meeting was organized with some 25 major financing institutions and agencies on 29 November 1991 at the ACP Secretariat in Brussels, Belgium. The main objective of the meeting was to explain in detail to the participating financing institutions, agencies and donors the UNTACDA II programme and to work out with them a framework of cooperation with the RMC.

7. In general, all the participants supported the UNTACDA II programme. The donor community expressed its readiness to assist Africa to implement the programme. Emphasis was placed on the need to view transport and communications as vital economic sectors which should not only pay for themselves but

also earn revenue for the national budget. In expressing their satisfaction with the UNTACDA II programme, many donor agencies also indicated their intention to collaborate among themselves and with the RMC in financing the UNTACDA II projects.

8. Regarding operative paragraphs 9-13 on establishing a Single Bureau for the Trans-African Highway Authorities, the following steps have been taken:

(a) Draft statutes for the Single Bureau are being prepared for approval by the second Combined Meeting of Intergovernmental Experts on Trans-African Highways to be held in June 1992;

(b) A mechanism for assessing and collecting contributions from the member States to support the Bureau is also under preparation for submission to the same meeting;

(c) Inclusion of the new extended programme for the Trans-African Highways programme in the first phase of UNTACDA II. In this regard, the RMC, of which UNDP is a member, is expected to contribute to the mobilization of resources for its execution.